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Windows Vista Home > The Features

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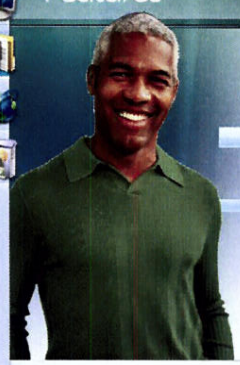

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- User Experience
- Security
- Search & Organization
- Internet Explorer 7
- Sidebar & Gadgets
- Performance
- Windows Backup
- Networking
- Windows SideShow
- Speech Recognition
- Help and Feedback
- Windows Update
- Sync Center
- Remote Assistance

Windows Sidebar and Gadgets

As you use your computer to access more information, perform more tasks, and interact with more software applications, you increasingly face information overload. You open a web browser just to check the weather, open an application to view your calendar, and open a calculator program to simply add numbers. You need simple, specialized, and lightweight mini-applications that put information and tasks at your fingertips—no matter what you're doing.

Windows Sidebar boosts your personal productivity by providing instant access to gadgets—a wide variety of engaging, easy-to-use, and customizable mini-applications that offer information at a glance and provide easy access to frequently used tools.

Windows Sidebar gives you quick access to gadgets like picture slide shows, Windows Media Player controls, or news headlines. You pick the gadgets you want to see in Windows Sidebar.

Gadgets

Gadgets are mini-applications with a wide variety of possible uses. Gadgets can connect to web services to deliver weather information, news updates, traffic maps, Internet radio streams, and slide shows of online photo albums. Gadgets can also integrate with your applications to streamline your interaction with them. For example, a gadget can give you an at-a-glance view of all your online instant messaging contacts, the day view from your calendar, or an easy way to control your media player. Of course, gadgets can also have any number of dedicated purposes. They can be calculators, games, sticky notes, and more.

Microsoft Windows Vista comes with an essential set of gadgets to get you started. You will be able to easily download more gadgets from an online gadget gallery. This gallery will host gadgets from a wide variety of developers and offer an extensive selection to meet your interests.

Windows Sidebar

Windows Sidebar is a pane on the side of the Windows Vista desktop that organizes gadgets and makes them easy to access. Windows Sidebar is the perfect complement to widescreen monitors and also works seamlessly on standard displays. You can easily customize Windows Sidebar to suit how you want to interact with it—whether you want it always on top or resting below maximized windows. You can also move gadgets off the Windows Sidebar and place them anywhere on your desktop.

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Windows Vista

Windows Vista Home › The Features

Quick Links | Home | Worldwide

Features

The Experience
The Features
The Community
Get Ready

Information for:
Small Businesses
Businesses
Developers
IT Professionals
Media Relations
Partners

For Everyone | For Your Home | For Your Business

User Experience
Security
Search & Organization
Internet Explorer 7
Sidebar & Gadgets
Performance
Windows Backup
Networking
Windows SideShow
Speech Recognition
Help and Feedback
Windows Update
Sync Center
Remote Assistance

Windows SideShow

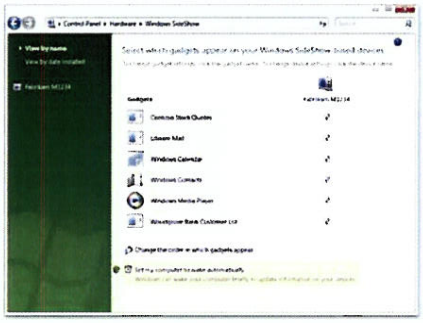
If you use a laptop computer, you know that starting up your laptop just to check a message or find an address or phone number isn't always practical.

Read more below...

Windows Vista SideShow technology enables laptop manufacturers to include a secondary or auxiliary display in future laptop designs. This display can be used to easily view the critical information you need, whether the laptop is on, off, or in sleep mode. The convenience provided by these auxiliary displays will save time and battery life by allowing you to quickly view meeting schedules, phone numbers, addresses, and recent e-mail messages without having to start up your laptop.

Quickly access the key information you need like appointments, key e-mails, or notes without turning on your laptop using Windows SideShow.

The Windows Vista SideShow platform will also enable hardware manufacturers to build auxiliary displays in a wide range of peripheral devices such as keyboards, LCD display casings, remote controls, and cell phones. These devices can then display information received from a Windows Vista-based PC, providing even more convenience to your everyday computing.



Easily manage the information you want to appear on Windows SideShow enabled devices.

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Windows Vista

Windows Vista Home › The Features

Features

The Experience

The Features

The Community

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Information for:

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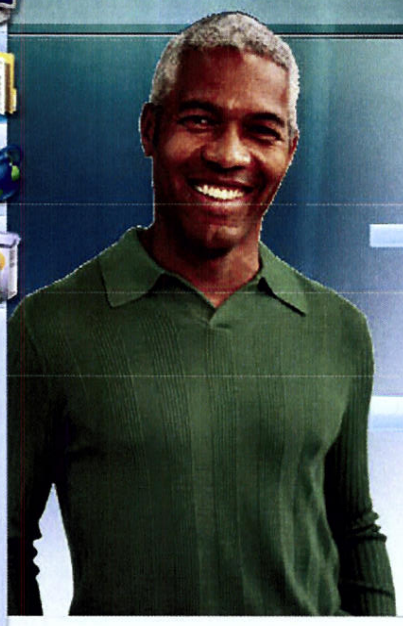

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- Security
- Search & Organization
- Internet Explorer 7
- Sidebar & Gadgets
- Performance
- Windows Backup
- Networking
- Windows SideShow
- Speech Recognition
- Help and Feedback
- Windows Update
- Sync Center
- Remote Assistance

Speech Recognition

Speech Recognition in Windows Vista empowers you to interact with your computer by voice. It allows you to significantly limit your use of mouse and keyboard while maintaining or increasing productivity. You can dictate documents and e-mail messages in mainstream applications, fill out forms on the web using voice commands, and seamlessly manage Windows Vista and applications by saying what you see.

Read more below...

Speech Recognition is fully integrated into Windows Vista and is built on top of the latest Microsoft speech technologies. It has unparalleled voice recognition accuracy that improves with use as it adapts to your speaking style and vocabulary. Speech Recognition supports multiple languages and includes a new human-sounding speech synthesizer.

With Speech Recognition in Windows Vista you can control your computer by voice whether dictating an e-mail or controlling applications.

Microsoft's Speech Recognition is designed to focus on what you want. Right from the start, you can work through guided setups and an interactive training application to get familiar with key concepts and commands. The innovative natural user interface provides choices or additional questions to help you along. Whether starting an application, selecting a word, or correcting a sentence, you are always in control and are smoothly guided toward a list of smart choices.

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Windows Vista

Quick Links | Home | Worldwide

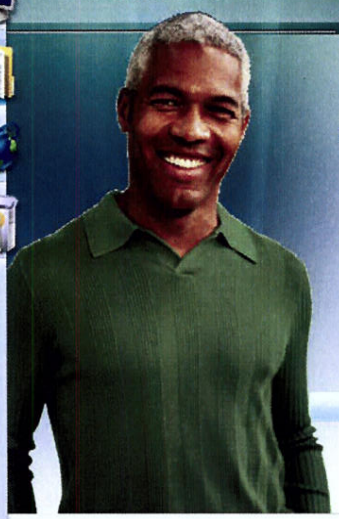
Windows Vista Home › The Features

Features

- The Experience
- The Features
- The Community
- Get Ready

Information for:

- Small Businesses
- Businesses
- Developers
- IT Professionals
- Media Relations
- Partners



For Everyone | For Your Home | For Your Business

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- Security
- Search & Organization
- Internet Explorer 7
- Sidebar & Gadgets
- Performance
- Windows Backup
- Networking
- Windows SideShow
- Speech Recognition
- Help and Feedback
- Windows Update
- Sync Center
- Remote Assistance

Windows Update

Windows Update helps to keep your computer up to date and more secure by providing Microsoft Windows Vista software updates. You can configure Windows Update to automatically download and install updates for you. You can essentially "set it and forget it."

In Windows Vista, the capabilities of Windows Update are extended beyond the features available in Windows XP and make updating easier and less disruptive.

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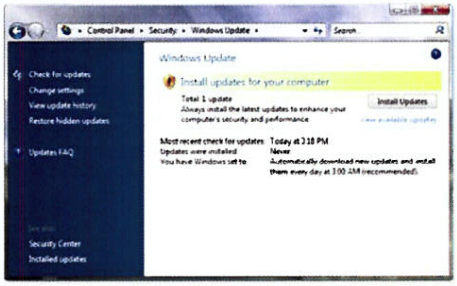

Customizing Windows Update settings and actions provides you with seamless updating and flexibility when those updates occur.

Easier

- Automatic delivery of important and recommended updates: In Windows Vista, Windows Update can automatically download and install both important and recommended updates. In earlier versions, only updates classified as "Important" could be installed automatically, and you had to manually select and download other available updates.
- Improved consistency: In Windows Vista, you will see the same user interface whether you are on your home computer or your corporate computer updated through a Windows software management solution.

Less disruptive

- More seamless updating: When an update applies to a file in use, Windows Vista can save the application's data, close the application, update the file, and then restart the application.
- Greater flexibility: In Windows Vista, updating occurs in the background or may be scheduled for a time that's convenient for you. If an update requires a restart to complete installation, you can schedule it for a regular time. You can also postpone a previously scheduled restart until your current work is complete.

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